Chapter 1:

1. What characters do you meet in this chapter? Begin character profiles for

each one: write their names or sketch the character and write some notes

about what you have learned about each of them.

2. How has life changed for Parvana’s family in ten years?

3. How long has it been since the mother and children, except for Parvana, have been outside the house?

5. What do you learn about the Taliban in this chapter?

Chapter 2:

1. What did the soldiers do to the family? Where do you think they have taken the father?

2. Why do you think the books are so important to the family? What do they represent?

3. Draw a sketch of the room where the family lives and its contents.

4. What happened to Hossain, the oldest brother?

5. When you are reading, what techniques do you use to figure out a word you don’t know (e.g., read ahead and back to see if it is defined; use the glossary; use context)? How does the author give clues to a word’s meaning (e.g., how does “stretched out on a toshak” help a reader understand what a “toshak” is)?

Chapter 3

1. Why did the Taliban order all windows to be painted over with black paint?
2. What emotions did you feel as you were reading this chapter? What caused them?
3. What character strengths has Parvana shown in the novel so far?

Chapter 4

1. What has happened to mother?
2. How do Parvana and Nooria differ on how they should handle their mother?
3. “Everybody leans on everybody in this family” (page 18). What does Parvana mean by this? Would you say this is true in your own family? How could you be a better support for your family and/or friends?

Chapter 5:

1. What are your first impressions of Mrs. Weera? Find two things she says or does that give you a strong sense of her character.

2. Parvana is responsible for bringing in water for the family. Why is it such an important and tiring job? Why must the water be boiled before they can drink it?

3. A reference to an Afghan Women’s Union appears on page 57. What kind of services and support do you think this organization would offer?